

VZCZCXYZ0001
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHQT #1993 2431129
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 311129Z AUG 07
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7649
INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY 6860
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 2663
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ AUG 0702
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 1889
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL PRIORITY 2739
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 001993

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: TEN YEARS
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [EC](#)
SUBJECT: ECUADOR: DEFENSE MINISTER RESIGNS

Classified By: DCM JEFFERSON T. BROWN FOR REASON 1.4 (D)

¶1. (SBU) Ecuadorian Defense Minister Lorena Escudero announced her resignation on August 30, saying that she had decided to accept "another challenge" within the national government. She indicated that President Correa would soon announce her new position. Escudero appears to have left on good terms with the Correa government. Both Foreign Minister Espinosa and Minister for Coordination of Internal and External Security Bustamante praised her contributions and expressed confidence that she would continue to work closely with the government. Vice Minister Miguel Carvajal remains in his position, at least for the time being, and will function as acting minister. There are no serious rumors as yet about whom Correa will name to replace Escudero, nor any indication when that decision will be made.

¶2. (SBU) Rumors of Escudero's impending departure had intensified August 21 when Pachakutik Congressman Ramsses Torres alerted journalists that her departure was likely. Torres leads the Congressional investigation commission that is expected to announce shortly its findings with respect to the helicopter crash that killed Escudero's predecessor. Speculation at that time was that Escudero disagreed with the weak punishments meted out following the accident. She was also reportedly unhappy that the reforms she had proposed, including allowing the Armed Forces to vote, had languished without support from others in the government. Immediately before resigning, Escudero made a public presentation of her agenda for the Armed Forces in an event together with Vice President Lenin.

¶3. (C) Comment: Escudero seemed a poor fit for the Defense Minister post from the beginning. The only surprise was that the resignation took place now instead of waiting until after the September 30 Constituent Assembly elections.

JEWELL